

# Newsletter

March 10th, 2026



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# FROM THE CEO



## Celebrating Diversity & Honoring Legacy

As we move from Black History Month into Women's History Month, it's an important moment to reflect on what makes the Greater Sandusky community strong: our people, our diversity, and our shared commitment to opportunity for all.

A thriving community is one that works for the entire community—including female- and minority-owned businesses, entrepreneurs, and civic leaders whose ideas, leadership, and investment make our region better every day. When opportunity is inclusive, the impact is stronger, more resilient, and more sustainable.

Last week, we were proud to celebrate that impact at our Minority Business Empowerment Team (MBET) Black Business Pioneer Awards on Thursday, February 26. The evening highlighted inspiring local business leaders whose work, perseverance, and innovation continue to shape our economy and our community. It was a powerful reminder of why this work matters.

At the Greater Sandusky Partnership, our commitment does not begin or end with a single month or a single event. We will continue to elevate women- and minority-owned businesses, support diverse leadership, and create pathways for engagement and growth. Representation matters—not only because it reflects who we are, but because it strengthens our companies, our neighborhoods, and our future.

Together, we will keep building a Greater Sandusky that is welcoming, inclusive, and positioned to succeed. Now and for generations to come.

***Eric Wobser | CEO, Greater Sandusky Partnership***



# Do You Want to Know More?

*Shores & Islands Ohio, Greater Sandusky Partnership and Erie County Commissioners announced a Strategic Partnership last month. Here are some FAQs to help you better understand what it means...*

### What is this partnership, in simple terms?

The partnership brings together Erie County, Shores & Islands Ohio, the Erie County Visitors and Convention Bureau (ECVCB), and the Greater Sandusky Partnership (GSP) to better coordinate destination marketing and economic development. The goal is to work together more effectively and create greater impact by aligning efforts at a regional scale.

### Why was this partnership pursued now?

Tourism activity and lodging tax revenues have grown in recent years, creating an opportunity to think more strategically about how those resources are used. At the same time, Erie County's Blue Ribbon Efficiency Commission recommended finding ways to reduce duplication and improve coordination, particularly where tourism and economic development overlap. This partnership reflects those recommendations.

### What changes operationally under this partnership?

The partnership improves coordination behind the scenes:

- GSP will provide management services for ECVCB and Shores & Islands Ohio.
- Shores & Islands Ohio continues to guide destination marketing through its board.
- A Chief Marketing Officer will oversee coordinated regional marketing efforts.

[CLICK HERE TO READ ALL FAQs >>>>](#)



**SHORES &  
ISLANDS  
OHIO**



[Read the Announcement](#)

# UPCOMING EVENTS



**March 5-15th**  
**Sandusky Restaurant**  
**Week**  
[LEARN MORE](#)



**March 13th**  
**Recruit, Engage & Retain**  
**Summer Interns**  
WEBINAR  
10:00 - 10:45 am  
[REGISTER](#)



**March 24th**  
**Continuing Your Legacy:**  
**Employee Ownership**  
WEBINAR  
10:00 - 11:00am  
[REGISTER](#)

[MORE EVENTS](#)

# MEMBERSHIP EXPERIENCE



## TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

We want to hear from YOU! Please consider taking our GSP Member Survey.

Are you enjoying your GSP membership?

What can we do improve your experience with the chamber?

What are YOUR business goals and how we can support them?

[TAKE SURVEY](#)



## MEMBER WEBINAR

### *Continuing Your Legacy Through Employee Ownership*

Succession planning starts with understanding what's right for your business. Join Greg Daugherty of Porter Wright for a practical overview of Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) and why they are becoming an increasingly popular, tax-advantaged option for business owners that offers ownership options for employees.

[REGISTER](#)



## GRAND OPENING

### *Celebrating Great Lakes Chocolate*

Congratulations to Great Lakes Chocolate! Owners, Mike and Ryan hosted their ribbon cutting with us last week and their grand opening this past weekend! The shop will be open weekends - Saturdays from 10-6 and Sundays from 10-4.

[READ MORE](#)



## HIRING SUMMER INTERNS? DON'T DO IT ALONE!

Join GSP for a webinar focused on the programs and platforms available to help employers recruit interns and keep them engaged in the community.

**DATE:** March 13

**TIME:** 10:00 - 10:45am

[REGISTER](#)



# TALENT ENGAGEMENT



[APPLY NOW](#)

## INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

*Applications Now Open!*

Employers can register interns to participate in a 6-week program for college-level summer interns where they will spend one day each week exploring the region.

In 2025, interns visited NASA Neil A. Armstrong Test Facility, took the ferry to Put-in-Bay, toured downtown Vermilion, and more!

Questions? Ask our Talent Engagement Manager, Jarvis:

[jcole@greatersandusky.com](mailto:jcole@greatersandusky.com)



## 2026 BLACK BUSINESS PIONEER AWARDS

*Celebrating Impact and Excellence in Greater Sandusky*

The Minority Business Empowerment Team, a program of GSP, celebrated Black History Month with its signature awards, the Black Business Pioneer Awards. Bill Hill, owner of D. Hilly Clothing Store; and Yolanda K. Churchwell, owner of The B.A.G., were honored this year.

[READ ABOUT IT](#)



## STUDENTS EXPLORE CAREERS IN FINANCE

### *Erie County Business Advisory Council Career Camp*

Earlier this week, 80 local students participated in a career camp to gain insight into careers in finance, including banking, public finance, government operations, and community-based financial services.



[READ MORE](#)

## STUDENTS COMPETE IN RISE PITCH CHALLENGE

The RISE Regional Youth Pitch Challenge allows students to highlight their entrepreneurial creativity and practice their public speaking skills by developing and presenting a business elevator pitch for a panel of judges – similar to Shark Tank!

On March 3, students participated in a Erie and Huron County Qualifier. 11 pitches made it to Finals on March 12th!

[CHECK IT OUT](#)



# DEVELOPMENT NEWS

## LAND AVAILABLE AT NASA *through Enhanced Use Lease Program*

NASA has announced it is inviting proposals to lease land parcels at the Neil Armstrong Test Facility, part of the NASA Glenn Research Center located in Erie County.

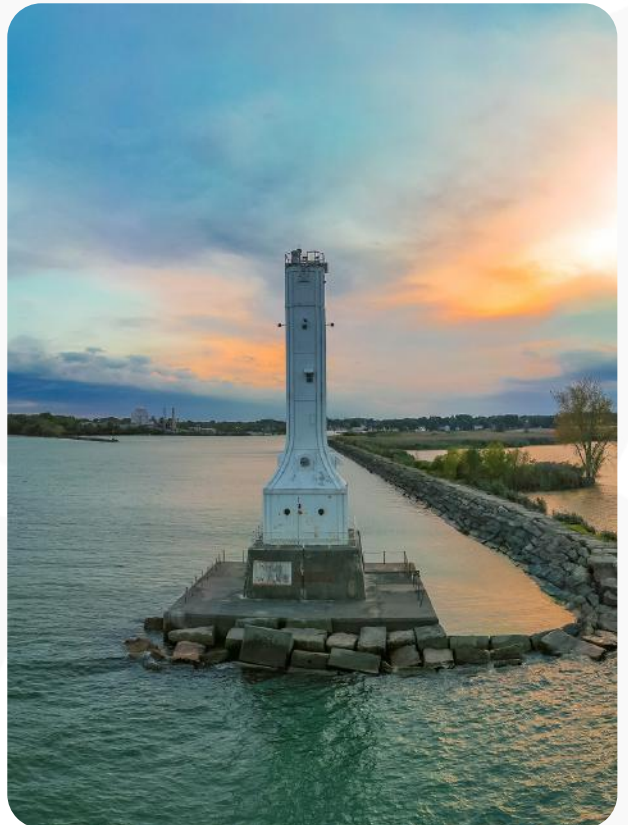
The Greater Sandusky Partnership, alongside local and regional partners, is supporting efforts to market the available land and provide information to organizations interested in leasing.

[\*\*LEARN MORE\*\*](#)



## PROJECTS THROUGH THE PORT *The Huron Joint Port Authority Approved First Project*

The Huron Joint Port Authority (HJPA), administered by GSP, approved its first project. The \$24M project led by Marous Development Group, consists of the construction of a 144 unit residential apartment complex on Mudbrook Road in Huron Township. Utilizing the capital lease program, the project will save approximately \$400K.





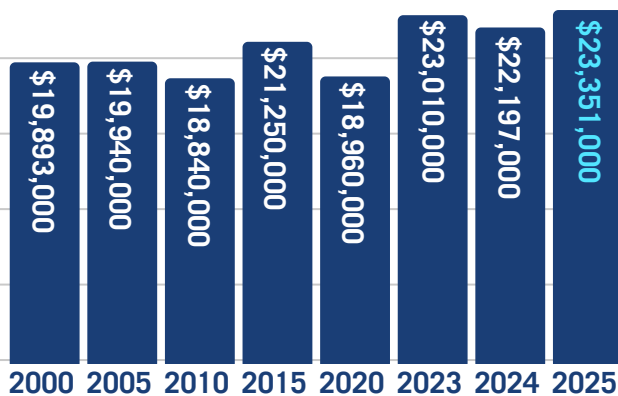
## Our Region by the Numbers

New economic data released in early 2026 highlights the continued strength of Erie County’s economy. Analysis from the Sandusky Bay Policy Center shows the region is outperforming similar counties across Ohio.

### \$23.35 MILLION

State of Ohio data confirms 2025 inflation-adjusted sales tax collections reached \$23.35 million, the highest level on record and 17.4% higher than 2000 in real dollars.

**Ohio County Sales Tax Collection Growth Erie County (Inflation Adjusted)**



\*Data Sources: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; Ohio Department of Taxation.

### \$5.36 BILLION

#### Erie County Gross Regional Product

According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Erie County’s total economic output reached \$5.36 billion in 2024, reflecting the value of all goods and services produced locally.

### +58%

#### Erie County Outperforms Similar-Sized Counties

Economic analysis shows Erie County generates 58% more taxable sales than counties of comparable population, highlighting the outsized role tourism and visitation play in our economy.

### \$320 MILLION

#### Accommodation & Food Services Industry

Visitor-related sectors continue to grow rapidly. Since 2001, the Accommodation & Food Services sector has more than tripled, reaching \$320 million in economic activity.

### \$1.3 BILLION

#### Estimated Annual Visitor Spending

Visitors contribute an estimated \$1.3 billion in taxable spending each year through shopping, dining, entertainment, and travel throughout Erie County.

# PROGRAMMING & PLACEMAKING



## SANDUSKY RESTAURANT WEEK

*Happening Now Through March 15<sup>th</sup>*

There are 27 participating restaurants in the 44870 area code featuring exclusive Sandusky Restaurant Week Menus for your to explore! Get out and support local this week!

Visit [shoresandislandsohio.com](https://shoresandislandsohio.com) to download the Restaurant Week Pass and see the full list of restaurants and their menus.

[DOWNLOAD YOUR PASS](#)



## PARTY AT THE PIER SUMMER CONCERTS

Party at the Pier, a free summer concert series on Jackson Street Pier, will return this June!

The band schedule will be announced on March 20<sup>th</sup>. Make sure you're following the [GSP Facebook](#) or our [Destination Sandusky Facebook](#) for the drop!

[FOLLOW US](#)

# Thank You

## NEW & RENEWED MEMBERS!



NOPEC | NORTHEAST OHIO PUBLIC ENERGY COUNCIL DBA ENNOVATE ADVISORS

LISA M TYLER DDS

ERIE IRONS GOLF

ERIE COUNTY BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

MAUCH FARMS, INC

BUCKEYE BITUMINOUS TRANSPORT, LLC

CASH IN YOUR CLOSET, INC.

# GSP Member & Community Events, Announcements and Updates

March 10, 2026

## ***Visibility & Promotional Opportunities with GSP...***

Members can post events, announcements, job opportunities or deals through the Member Center. These posts are published directly on the [GSP website](#) under [Community Events](#), [Local Job Opportunities](#), [Deals & Discounts](#) or [Member Announcements](#).

**Members, please note**, if you have an addition to the newsletter, it should be 8.5"x11" and shared as either a png, jpg or PDF file. Newsletters will be sent monthly. Please send your flyers to Alissa Fisher, Director of Marketing, at [afisher@greatersandusky.com](mailto:afisher@greatersandusky.com).

Not yet a member? Join GSP today as a [Business Member](#), [Community Partner](#), [Individual Member](#) or [NCYP Member](#)!

[MEMBER CENTER GUIDE](#)

[MEMBER APPLICATION](#)



[greatersandusky.com](http://greatersandusky.com)  
[info@greatersandusky.com](mailto:info@greatersandusky.com)  
419-625-6421

# TROUBLE AFFORDING CHILD CARE?

## The Erie County Tuition Assistance Program Can Help!!

Covers licensed & unlicensed care

Must meet 2 of these:  
1. Live in Erie County  
2. Work in Erie County  
3. Child care is in Erie County

Funds granted for up to one year

For children 6wks-12 years of age

Receive 1:1 support from CCRC Specialist

Employers can contribute to help employees succeed!

### Is My Family Eligible?

#### Family Size:



#### Income Limit:

\$2,383/month

\$3,004/month

\$3,625/month

\$4,247/month



*\*Made possible through the Dorn Foundation, Mylander Foundation, and supported by the Erie County Community Foundation.\**

Apply Now!

Questions? Contact Tiffany Felter:  
440-242-0413 ext. \*251 or  
tfelter@ccrcinc.com

  
**child care**  
RESOURCE CENTER



# UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

## ALL MONTH LONG

### GIRLS WHO CODE CODING CLUB

**11**

**WED  
MAR**

10:00am or 11:00am: Babies & Toddler  
Time: Bring your little ones to the Library  
1:30pm: Preschool Storytime

**12**

**THU  
MAR**

12:00pm: Listen & Learn: Notable Ohio  
Musicians  
6:00pm: Intro to Medicare

**13**

**FRI  
MAR**

10:30am: Senior Stretch  
1:00pm: Scrabble Fridays

**14**

**SAT  
MAR**

10:00am: Coffee & Conversations with Greater  
Sandusky Partnership

**[VIEW ALL PROGRAMS & EVENTS ONLINE!](#)**

**GSP MEMBER & COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**



# Believe in Firelands

## *60 Years of Impact*

Celebrate the people, partnerships, and progress that define BGSU Firelands.

Join us for a community engagement event featuring the unveiling of our annual report and a look ahead at new scholarship opportunities.

**March 12, 2026 | 5p.m.**

Doors open at 4:30 p.m.

Cedar Point Center, BGSU Firelands

1 University Dr., Huron, Ohio

REGISTER NOW



# Sandusky Bay Initiative

Launched by the state of Ohio in 2016, the Sandusky Bay Initiative is an ambitious effort to improve the health of Sandusky Bay. Extensive planning and engineering resulted in a suite of innovative projects within western Sandusky Bay that will benefit people and nature.

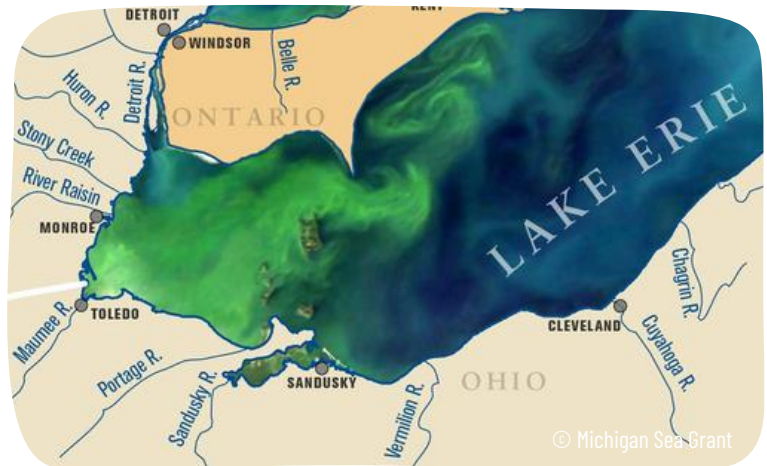
© Mark Godfrey/TNC

## BACKGROUND

Located where the mouth of the Sandusky River connects to the waters of Lake Erie, Sandusky Bay is one of the most important bodies of water in northern Ohio with one of the largest ranges of coastal wetlands in the Lake Erie basin.

Historically, this area was a thriving, interconnected wetland complex home to diverse wildlife and native vegetation. The high-quality wetlands provided critical nursery and spawning habitat with shelter and food for fish, insects, crustaceans and more, resulting in one of the most productive fisheries in the world in the 1800s.

Over time, a myriad of impacts have compromised the health of the Bay. A majority of the wetlands were drained with subsurface tile and converted to agricultural land that can add nutrient pollution to waters. Shorelines were hardened, and nearby streams leading to the Bay were straightened and channelized. These changes led to devastating consequences including annual harmful algal blooms during the warmer months, shoreline erosion and reduced habitat for wildlife like fish and migratory shorebirds.



© Michigan Sea Grant

This map depicts an algal bloom in western Lake Erie and the major rivers that drain into the lake. Gray circles indicate major points of entry for pollution into the lake. Sandusky Bay is located where the Sandusky River connects to Lake Erie.



Shoreline erosion

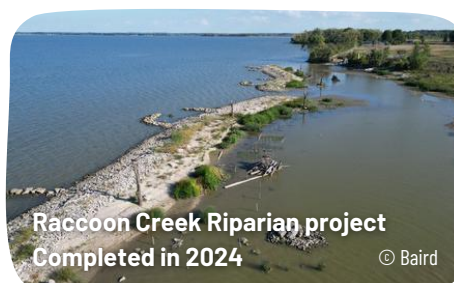
© Alexis McCarter/TNC

# Inner Bay Projects

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Ohio Department of Natural Resources have advanced projects in western Sandusky Bay, known as the "inner bay." Extensive research and modeling informed engineered design plans for 12 projects (shown below), and three have been implemented at Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area. Collectively, these projects are anticipated to restore 1,000 acres of wetlands and 11,000 linear feet of nature-based shoreline and improve water quality by reducing total phosphorus by approximately 2,000 pounds per year.

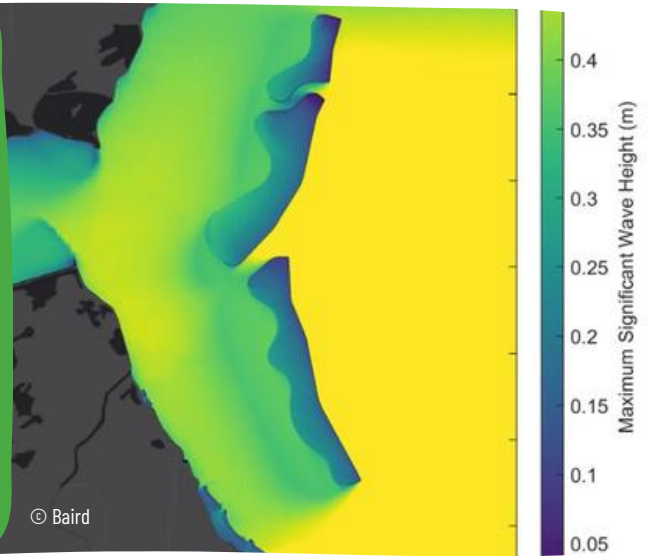


The Raccoon Creek project and Pickerel Creek East are examples of nature-based barrier wetland restoration projects designed to protect from erosion, improve water quality and create wildlife habitat. Pickerel Creek Riparian project reconnected a channelized creek to its floodplain, which allows nutrient and sediment retention and improves water quality.



**WE NEED YOU!**

Modeling (right) indicates that the Inner Bay Wetlands is the most beneficial Sandusky Bay initiative project. It would entail restoring 600 acres of wetlands strategically located at the mouth of Muddy Creek Bay. This would reduce nearshore wave energy and nutrients in the Bay water column up to 40%, which would greatly improve water quality. TNC is exploring funding opportunities, permitting needs and connecting with interested community members and groups to gain input on the project. Please reach out for more information to Ashlee Decker at [ashlee.decker@tnc.org](mailto:ashlee.decker@tnc.org).



# Sandusky Bay Restoration Public Input Meetings



© Mark Godfrey/TNC

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Ohio is hosting a series of public meetings to share more about the important work happening in Sandusky Bay to improve water quality and wildlife habitat. These projects are part of the Sandusky Bay Initiative, an ambitious effort to improve the health of the Bay. Extensive planning and engineering resulted in a suite of innovative projects within western Sandusky Bay that will benefit people and nature. TNC wants to connect with everyone who has an interest in Sandusky Bay to gather input on future projects. Please join us at one of the public meetings listed below, or contact Ashlee Decker ([ashlee.decker@tnc.org](mailto:ashlee.decker@tnc.org)) to learn how you can get involved or set up a presentation for your group.

## PUBLIC MEETING DATES

### **March 17, 2026**

**4-7 p.m. Openhouse**  
**5:30 p.m. Presentation**  
**Sandusky Library**  
**Frohman Room**  
**114 W. Adams St.**  
**Sandusky, OH 44870**

### **March 18, 2026**

**4-7 p.m. Openhouse**  
**5:30 p.m. Presentation**  
**Fremont Library**  
**Room A and B**  
**423 Croghan St.**  
**Fremont, OH 43420**

# SANDUSKY

PUBLIC ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION

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**CALL FOR ARTISTS**  
WHEELS PARK **MURAL**



**CALL FOR ARTISTS**  
WHEELS PARK **SCULPTURE**





# 2026 ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

## NASA ARMSTRONG ADVOCACY COALITION

FEATURING

SAVE THE DATE

**MARCH**  
**25, 2026**



**GENERAL JOHN F.**  
**"JT" THOMPSON**

LIEUTENANT GENERAL,  
UNITED STATES AIR  
FORCE, RET.



**JOSEPH E.**  
**ZEIS JR.**

SR. ADVISOR FOR AEROSPACE  
& DEFENSE AND U.S. AIR  
FORCE COLONEL, RET.

SPONSORED BY



**Join NASA Armstrong Advocacy Coalition for an evening aligning around space, defense, and our regional economy**

**In this annual event you'll hear from guest speakers: General John F. "JT" Thompson, Lt. General USAF, Ret Joseph E. Zeis Jr., Sr. Advisor for Aerospace & Defense, and USAF Col, ret.**

**Enjoy hors d'oeuvres and networking and join our cause.**

**For just \$25 you get entry into the event AND support NASA Armstrong Advocacy Coalition's work for one year, including mission trips to Washington DC in support of the Armstrong Test Facility right here in Sandusky, Ohio.**

**[REGISTER TO ATTEND](#)**



## GET READY FOR BOATING SEASON!

The **South Shore Marine Boat Expo 2026** is your spring kickoff to everything boating on Lake Erie! For two full days, enjoy exclusive seasonal incentives, expert guidance, local marine vendors, and hands-on support—all under one roof at our Huron showroom. Whether you're preparing for launch, upgrading your ride, or exploring your first boat, this expo delivers unbeatable value and an incredible start to the 2026 season.

### Why You'll Love the South Shore Marine Boat Expo

- ✓ Season-Opening Savings & Incentives
- ✓ Trade-In & Trade-Up Opportunities
- ✓ Early Access to New 2026 Models
- ✓ Local Marine Vendors & Community Partners
- ✓ Certified Technician Support & Spring Launch Prep
- ✓ Family-Friendly Atmosphere
- ✓ Free Admission & Easy, Onsite Parking
- ✓ Lake Erie's Boating Community—All in One Place

[RSVP NOW!](#)

**GSP MEMBER & COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**



# OHIO ART DECO

SATURDAY, MARCH 28,  
AT 2:00 P.M.



JOSH LIPNIK, MIDWEST MODERN  
PRESENTER

GRONDBREAKING CEREMONY  
FRIDAY APRIL 22 2:00



## **YOUR CLOTHES ARE OUR PROFESSION**

**WRINKLE FREE** ✓

**STAIN REMOVAL** ✓

**INCREASED LONGEVITY** ✓

**DELIVERY** ✓

## **Corporate Offerings**

**First-Month Special Pricing**

**Scheduled Pickup-Drop Off**

**Corporate Base Discounts**

**\*Priority Turn Around**

**Dedicated Account Manager**



**Start your corporate account today!**

**Contact: Edmond Hoty**

**☎ 419-656-0602**

**\*Additional Cost**

**GSP MEMBER & COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**



## Elevating Rural

Creating a Stronger Economic  
Environment for Rural America



# OHIO RURAL BUSINESS INITIATIVE

Is your rural business ready for the next level? The Ohio Rural Business Initiative is a collaborative effort to bring resources and access to capital to rural-based small businesses in all sectors. Join us for this exclusive event to learn how the SBA and other agencies are working together to help you grow.

## Why You Should Attend:

- Unlock Resources** : Understand exactly what tools the SBA and other agencies offer specifically for rural businesses.
- Access Funding** : Learn the step-by-step process of how your business can obtain the capital needed to expand.
- Grow YourNetwork** : Meet with officials, providers, and fellow small rural business owners.

Friday, May 29, 2026

10:00 AMtoNoon

96 S Washington Street

Tiffin, OH44883

Registration: <https://SBA-Ohio-Rural-Tiffin.eventbrite.com>

POC: Ray Graves, [raymond.graves@sba.gov](mailto:raymond.graves@sba.gov)





Firelands Federal Credit Union | Mailing Address: P.O. Box 8005, Bellevue, OH 44811 | Phone: 1-800-276-5775

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:**

Melanie Myers, Communications Director  
Firelands Federal Credit Union  
Phone: 567-805-4205  
Email: myersm@firelandsfcu.org



March 5, 2026

**Firelands FCU Offers Up To \$20,000 in Grant Funds Through 2026 Welcome Home Program**

BELLEVUE, Ohio – Firelands Federal Credit Union (Firelands FCU), in cooperation with The Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati (FHLB Cincinnati), is pleased to announce the return of the Welcome Home Program (WHP).

The WHP offers grants to fund reasonable down payment and closing costs for low- and moderate-income homebuyers. In 2025, a total of 13 Firelands FCU members received \$260,000 in grant funds to assist them in securing mortgages.

This year, eligible homebuyers can receive up to \$20,000 to bring them closer to homeownership. WHP funds will be available for reservation beginning at 8:00 AM ET on April 6, 2026, and will remain open until all funds have been reserved. Reservations may not be submitted in advance. Funds are offered on a "first-come, first-served" basis.

"Buying a home can sometimes feel out of reach, but the Welcome Home program helps make that dream more attainable. Each year, we look forward to helping homebuyers take advantage of this grant opportunity and reach closing day," said Angela Grimmer, Firelands FCU's VP of Mortgage Lending.

Details and other WHP requirements are identified online at [www.firelandsfcu.org](http://www.firelandsfcu.org)

**About Firelands FCU:** Firelands FCU is a member-focused financial institution offering a variety of savings and lending products. Chartered in 1957, we are committed to improving the financial wellbeing of our members and offering services that support their long-term financial goals.

###



# ENERGY DECISIONS SIMPLIFIED

When it comes to energy supply decisions, the options can feel overwhelming.

**That's where the Chamber Energy Program comes in.** We do the research, compare the options, and present clear, vetted recommendations—so you don't have to spend hours trying to become an energy expert.



"Alternatives are provided to **make the decision easier** without having to do a lot of extra research on my own. Leaving it to the **trusted experts**."

— Robert Businger, Ramco Specialties Inc.

Our team evaluates the market, supplier offerings, and your existing rate and then walks you through your best options in plain language.

**You stay in control of the decision—without the burden of doing the homework.**

If you'd rather focus on running your business and leave energy strategy to experienced professionals, we're here to help.

**Get started with a free, no-obligation energy bill review today.** Simply visit [chamberenergyprogram.com](http://chamberenergyprogram.com), fill out the form, and upload a recent copy of your electric and gas bills (all pages).

*Savings not guaranteed. Savings may vary.*



604 W Washington, Suite 1  
Sandusky, Ohio 44870

[greatersandusky.com](http://greatersandusky.com)  
[info@greatersandusky.com](mailto:info@greatersandusky.com)  
419-625-6421